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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	A-01	CA-02	CCO-00
	CIAE-00	SJK-01	CTME-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00	EB-01
	FBO-01	HA-09	H-01	IMMC-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19
	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	M-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-06
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPR-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01
	RP-10	SCT-03	SIL-01	SNP-01	SP-01	SR-01	SSC-01
	SSO-00	SS-01	STR-20	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	USSH-00
	FMP-01	/119W					

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8341
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 01599

E.O. 12356: DECL:N/A
TAGS: PREL, MARR, PINR, PHUM, ASEC, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: PART 7: AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT, FEBRUARY 12:
- NUGGETS

REF(S): CARACAS 01550

1. GOVERNMENT WILL RESTORE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ON FEBRUARY 13 THE PRESS REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT CARLOS
ANDRES PEREZ WILL RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
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ON FEBRUARY 13 THAT IT RESTORE ARTICLE 66 OF THE
CONSTITUTION GUARANTEEING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. (THE
GOV ON FEBRUARY 11 AGREED TO REMOVE CENSORS FROM THE
MEDIA PREMISES BASED ON THE PROMISES OF THE MEDIA OWNERS
TO RESPECT GOVERNMENT WISHES. HOWEVER, THE SUSPENSION
OF ARTICLE 66 CONTINUED.)

2. JOURNALISTS BARRED FROM CONGRESS

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA (CONGRESSMAN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED
DATE/CASE ID: 03 AUG 2006 200503206

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PEDRO PARIS MONTESINOS) AND COPEI (CONGRESSMAN LUIS ENRIQUE OBERTO) ON FEBRUARY 12 BARRED THE PRESS FROM ENTERING CONGRESS. THIS ACTION WAS CHARACTERIZED BY EL DIARIO DE CARACAS OF FEBRUARY 13 AS "AN UNPRECEDENTED STEP". MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES CAME TO CONGRESS TO COVER THE DEBATE BY THE CONGRESSIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THE GOV'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS SINCE FEBRUARY 4 (CARACAS 01460). ON BEING TOLD BY CONGRESSIONAL GUARDS THAT NO JOURNALISTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER CONGRESS, THEY IMMEDIATELY HELD A PUBLIC MEETING IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING AND DECIDED TO BOYCOTT NEWS COVERAGE OF THE CONGRESS AND OF THE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO BAR THEM (AD, COPEI AND NEW DEMOCRATIC CONVERGENCE). (THIS DECISION WAS NOT RESPECTED BY MOST NEWSPAPERS ON FEBRUARY 13). THE JOURNALISTS THEN MARCHED TO THE NEARBY PLAZA BOLIVAR WHERE THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE JOURNALIST UNION, FRANCISCO SOLORZANO, DECLARED: "TO THE PEOPLE OF CARACAS, WE BRING YOU GOOD NEWS -- AS OF TOMORROW YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO READ IN THE

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NEWSPAPERS ALL THE NONSENSE THAT (COMES OUT) OF CONGRESS."

3. AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO MIRAFLORES NOTED IN THE PRESS

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE PRESS AT MIRAFLORES ON HIS MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY, BEATRICE RANGEL, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT "WE AGREE THAT WITH MORE FREE TRADE AND INVESTMENT, THE CITIZENS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WILL BENEFIT; IT WILL PROVIDE MORE WORK IN DETROIT AND MORE WORK IN CARACAS AND MARACAIBO."

4. CALDERA: "I TALKED TO THE COUNTRY WHILE OTHERS SPOKE TO THE HEMICYCLE (WALLS OF PARLIAMENT)"

IN A LONG INTERVIEW WITH EL DIARIO DE CARACAS ON FEBRUARY 13, FORMER PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERA ADMITTED THAT HIS STATEMENT IN CONGRESS ON FEBRUARY 4 "UNDOUBTEDLY DAMAGED" POLITICAL LEADERS. "I BELIEVE THAT WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THAT MOMENT WAS THAT I SPOKE TO THE COUNTRY WHILE THE OTHERS SPOKE TO THE WALLS OF CONGRESS (AL HEMICICLO). THEY SPOKE TO THE POLITICAL CIRCLES, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THAT THE WHOLE COUNTRY

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WANTED A DIFFERENT MESSAGE. I FULFILLED MY DUTY AND I REGRET THAT ATTACKS MADE AGAINST ME HAVE REACHED SUCH A LOW-LEVEL, WHICH I BELIEVE I DO NOT HAVE TO RESPOND TO, SINCE THE BEST RESPONSE IS THE APPROVAL (I RECEIVED FROM) THE PUBLIC THAT WAS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE AND ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MY MESSAGE." CALDERA ALSO EXPLAINED THAT AS A "SENATOR FOR LIFE" HE DOES NOT FEEL

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CONSTRAINED TO RESPECT PARTY DECISIONS.

5. COPEI: WE SUPPORT DEMOCRACY, NOT CAP

IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 12, GUSTAVO TARRE, CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR FOR COPEI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE EDUARDO FERNANDEZ, SAID THAT THE EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 4 INDICATED "FUNDAMENTALLY THE LOSS OF LEGITIMACY BY POLITICAL LEADERS. WHEN THE STATE CANNOT JUSTIFY ITS EXISTENCE AND WHEN THE CITIZENS DO NOT IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH THE GOVERNMENT, (THE GOVERNMENT) LOSES LEGITIMACY, NOT SO THE CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY." FOR THIS REASON, TARRE STATED, COPEI SUPPORTS THE CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY AND NOT THE GOVERNMENT OF CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT COPEI SECRETARY-GENERAL, EDUARDO FERNANDEZ, WILL ON FEBRUARY 13 ANNOUNCE AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM TO THAT OF CAP, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF CORRUPTION, BORDER PROBLEMS WITH COLOMBIA, AND WAYS AND MEANS TO

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	A-01	CA-02	CCO-00
	CIAE-00	SJK-01	CTME-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00	EB-01
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	FMP-01	/119W					

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8342

INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 01599

E.O. 12356: DECL:N/A

TAGS: PREL, MARR, PINR, PHUM, ASEC, PGOV, VE

SUBJECT: PART 7: AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT, FEBRUARY 12:

INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN GOVERNMENT.
TARRE ALSO INDICATED THAT "NOW IS THE TIME TO TWIST THE
ARM OF THE PRESIDENT TO CHANGE (HIS) DIRECTION."

6. CAP'S WEEKLY RADIO MESSAGE: I AM TALKING TO PEOPLE

IN HIS WEEKLY RADIO BROADCAST TO THE NATION ON FEBRUARY
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13, CAP EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION AT ATTENDING TWO
MEETINGS THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 12. THE FIRST WAS WITH A
NUMBER OF VENEZUELAN INTELLECTUALS NORMALLY CRITICAL OF
HIS ADMINISTRATION. THE MEETING, ACCORDING TO CAP, WAS
HELD IN ORDER TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH THE OPINIONS
OF OTHERS ABOUT THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY. THE
INTELLECTUALS AND CAP AGREED TO MEET AGAIN FOR AN
IN-DEPTH PRESENTATION BY THE GOV ON WHY IT BELIEVES ITS
ECONOMIC PACKAGE IS WORKING AND FOR A PRESENTATION OF
ITS PROPOSED SOCIAL MEGA-PROJECT.

CAP ALSO MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN
COMPANIES IN VENEZUELA. ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, HE
WAS PARTICULARLY HAPPY ABOUT TWO THINGS THESE

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REPRESENTATIVES TOLD HIM: (A) THEY WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN VENEZUELA, AND (B) THEIR REPORTS TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS ABOUT THE RECENT COUP ATTEMPT WERE MORE POSITIVE THAN THOSE WRITTEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, WHICH CAP QUALIFIED AS "EXAGGERATED."

7. PLANNING MINISTER DISPUTES LINKAGE BETWEEN COUP AND
- ECONOMIC PACKAGE
- -----

PLANNING MINISTER MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ ON FEBRUARY 12 DENIED ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PACKAGE AND THE COUP ATTEMPT OF FEBRUARY 4, AND HE CLAIMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN IS "THE BEST SOCIAL POLICY." THE MINISTER COMMENTED THAT AN IMPORTANT FACTOR EXPLAINING THE RECENT COUP ATTEMPT AND THE RIOTS OF 1989 WAS THE DECLINE IN REAL INCOME DURING THE 1980'S. RODRIGUEZ CLAIMED THAT BETWEEN 1978 AND 1986 REAL INCOME DECLINED

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(HE PROVIDED NO PERCENTAGE OF DECLINE), WITH A SLIGHT RECUPERATION BETWEEN 1986 AND 1988, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY LED TO A PRECIPITOUS DROP IN THE INTERNATIONAL RESERVES OF THE COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO RODRIGUEZ, IT IS ONLY SINCE 1991-92 THAT THE SITUATION HAS IMPROVED. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT THE FISCAL DEFICIT MUST BE CONTROLLED.

8. OVER 200 OFFICERS ARRESTED
- -----

EL NACIONAL ON FEBRUARY 13 REPORTED THAT OVER 200 MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, MOST OF THEM IN THE AREA OF CARACAS. THE NEWSPAPER ALSO CLAIMS THAT A MILITARY COURT JUDGE HANDLING THE CASE IS COLONEL RIGOBERTO HERNANDEZ ARMAS FROM THE NATIONAL GUARD.

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